792 to divine Providence. These are the mystics.

775 However, the deism of either type is not very deep. All believe that a dead person will rejoin his ancestors and dwell eternally with them. They imagine, however, that "the road to Eternity is hard and the Kingdom of God so remote from the earth that they give cowries to their dead to pay their way through difficulties, the hazards of the journey being directly related to the good or bad actions of the deceased."

This may be said to be a kind of vague notion of a hell or a purgatory. However, this hell is neither the "everlasting fire of the Christians nor the horrible sufferings of the Moslems," since the person is supposed to be with his relatives.

The Alkyoamé. One sometimes hears a Moaga say: "I cannot avenge what you have done to me, but it will be settled on the day of alkyoamé." This is a somewhat superficial notion of a Day of Judgment. The Moaga does not really believe in a final judgment any more than he believes in the end of the world or the resurrection of the body. By the words alkyoamé daré, he alludes to the day when he and his enemy will both die and God will subject one of them to a punishment -- understood to be temporary -- for the harm he has done the other. [200]

Beliefs and Superstitions Concerning the Soul After Death

● 774 What do the Mossi believe the human being to be? Man is composed of three elements: the visible body, the siga or toulé (soul), and the kima (ghost).

The siga, which may be called the soul, is the part of the man which is to return to God.

Siga. According to the Mossi, the siga or toulé is easily frightened. A great sorrow, illness, or the death of a loved one can cause it to abandon the body temporarily. It then assumes a human appearance and can be seen by the person himself or by others. In that case, charms or fetishes are used to make it return.

774 761 Its temporary absence from the body is not thought to have any serious consequences since this does not disturb the normal functions of the human organism, but, since body and soul cannot

live without each other, its prolonged absence is thought to cause death.

Kima (from ki, "to die"). This is a sort of silhouette of a person who is about to die. It is visible only to certain initiates. It is said, however, to be somewhat deformed, and its presence may make one's hair stand on end or cause shivers that paralyze the legs and make walking impossible.

The siga may be distinguished from the kima in that the latter, being already dead, has its head completely shaved, wears ashes in the form of [201] a cross or X on its forehead, or has its feet stained with blood.

As soon as the person dies, his kima roams around the house for a time and then joins his ancestors at Pilimpikou.

Pilimpikou. Pilimpikou is a village belonging to the administrative district of Koudougou (upper Volta). On a mountain nearby, there is a grotto which is regarded as the sacred place where the kimsé of all the dead Mossi assemble.

Legend has it that any deceased relative may be found again at Pilimpikou if one were so unfortunate as not to have been present during his last moments. One can also go there to find out where the deceased has hidden part of his fortune or some valuable object.

It is said that one has only to go to the Tingsoba of Pilimpikou and ask him to use his influence to call the deceased.

The Tingsoba orders the petitioner not to shed a single tear at the sight of the "ghost," and, the legend goes on to say, if the secret of the interview with the kima is not kept, the person will die within the year.

Finally, it is believed that when the kimsé welcome new members -- they represent the whole family of all the dead Mossi for countless generations -- they organize games whose echoes are heard by the inhabitants of Pilimpikou.

Young people of both sexes who were unmarried at the time of their death and newborn children who have died [202] return to that place where they dwelt before coming into the world in order to "return to human form in the womb of another woman or of their former mother." As we noted in an earlier paragraph, the Mossi believe in reincarnation. [203]

help each other. If they are sometimes, indeed too often, fleeced by middlemen—and it would seem that the various European administrations, no matter what their nationality, should prevent such speculations in their own best interests—if the natives are fleeced, a European ignorant of the customs and the language would be fleeced all the more. Who would guard his herds during his absence; who would lead them to far markets if he stayed home? It is difficult to find a native [181] who can be fully trusted. At present, however, trading in livestock is the only possible source of profit in the country.

The forthcoming railroad will soon change trade conditions and promote the interests of the Europeans without undermining those of the natives. This is to be desired, because Mossi country will only come fully into its own when its products can be exported. The natives were too long isolated as a result of their continuous warfare, and the nabas, it must be said, were too inclined to monopolize all the goods, for trade to develop in a significant way. The French peace, by making the roads safe, has already done much for the country; it will achieve even more when the railroad which is now cutting across Mossi country links it on the one hand to the Ivory Coast and on the other hand to the Niger Colony. Trade will then no longer be carried out exclusively with the Germans and the British, and as soon as native products find sure channels of export, the raising of livestock and agriculture itself will be greatly extended. The Mossi are not averse to trade. [181 They actually seem to possess a real knack for it, which until now 439] they have had no opportunity to exercise freely. They have not yet taken full advantage of their transactions, and this is why they seemed to some observers to have no aptitude for trade. They will adapt to it, as they already are.

/65/ Chapter 3. Hygiene, Disease, Death, and Burial

828 Part of life, especially the life of a Black, is spent in sleep, but 774 the slumberer is sometimes disturbed by dreams that are more or less 787 extraordinary. The Mossi attribute dreams to ancestral and other spirits. They also say that the soul leaves the body during sleep and does the things witnessed in the dream. Sorcerers are consulted to find out what caused the dreams and how to cope with the bad omens.

776 kikiriga, in turn, are to ward off anything that might harm the crop,
241 birds, caterpillars, thieves, and the like, and to fill with millet a granary of the size drawn on the ground with ashes at the time of harvest. If the kikiriga has properly carried out his duties, he gets another chicken when all the grain has been gathered in a heap.
776 Pregnant women are under the protection of a special kikiriga, and
[843] small children have one of their own to ward off illness and danger. Do we not say ourselves that a special Providence watches over the very young?

776 Actually, everyone has his kikiriga. Some have an evil one, and
828 those are the people who quarrel with everybody, the ones who are never successful, whose livestock dies, for the kikirsi often kill the
[677] goats, sheep, and horses that die of illness. Other people have a good kikiriga, and for them everything goes well; they were born under a lucky star. These are the engaging, sweet, good-natured people
[513] who get rich and who have many children. When a Mossi lies down to sleep in his hut, he rests his head on a stone or a small mound of beaten earth. This is where his kikiriga dwells, and from time to time, especially when he feels the need for special protection, he
[782] sacrifices a guinea hen or sometimes even a goat, with the understanding that the spirit will chase away all fellow spirits who might want to harm him and will avert all illness and all danger from his path.

/83/ The tangandé is a spirit who has the shape of an animal and
776 who is regarded as the protector of a village. The term is also ex-
778 tended to designate the spirit's place of residence, usually the sacred
825 grove but sometimes a mere stone or even an open space. The tangandé may be a crocodile, a boa, a leopard, a turtle, a deer, a hare, etc. The animal is sacred to the whole village and may not be killed in the sacred grove, but it may be killed elsewhere, even a short distance from the thicket.

776 The tangandé is a guardian spirit because it protects men and sends
755 its servants to accompany the village people on trips when they request it to do so. The natives incessantly turn to it for protection, and the sorcerers incessantly refer those who consult them to the tangandé to obtain cures and to request the release of souls held captive
776 by evil sorcerers. When someone dies, sacrifices are made to the
782 tangandé with requests to protect the survivors and to ward off illness.
[774] When souls leave the body during sleep, they often go to the sacred grove. Anyone may sacrifice to the tangandé and in the tangandé.

776 tangandé in every detail either, for only the village may have a tangandé, and there does not seem to be any magic pact unless the sacrifices offered are considered as such a pact, which does not seem justified. The tangandé animal is never sacrificed, and no special initiation takes place.

774 761 [775] The closest thing to totemism among the Mossi seems to be their concept of the human soul, and yet it is not, properly speaking, a totem in the sense indicated by these authors. Every man has a soul that lives on after death and takes the name of kyma, while during life it is called siga. Shortly before death it takes the name of toullé [197] /85/ in Ouagadougou or toundo in Koupela, but siga, toundo, kyma are one and the same thing, one and the same principle. According to the Mossi, this soul is an animal, invisible of course, a snake, a crocodile, a deer, a hare. The soul is related to this animal, it belongs to the same family, so that to kill a snake or a crocodile in a village where the soul of the inhabitants is a snake or a crocodile is to kill an inhabitant of the village; every individual related to the snake has a snake in the village to represent thim, and he will die when his soul-animal dies.

774 784 Yet, and this runs counter to the definitions of totemism, the individual expects no aid from this animal, never sacrifices to it, and never kills it himself to renew the kinship pact. A person whose soul is a crocodile is forbidden to kill crocodiles in his own village, but he may kill them elsewhere, although he may never eat them, while he may kill the tangandé animal as long as he does so outside the tangandé, and he may eat it at any time. Some people, when they [766] find a dead soul-animal of their family near their village, render it funeral honors, weep, wail, and bury it as one of their own, but they offer it no gifts and hold no koure. Generally it is merely covered with earth. The most widespread soul-animals are a kind of snake (bosombodro) and the crocodile. Several families may have the same [582] one, and marriage, although exogamic, is not forbidden between members of these families.

774 754 The soul may leave the body and in fact leaves it often, especially during the night. If children had a good time in a certain place, if they enjoyed themselves at someone's house, the soul returns there at night. This is when the worst is to be feared from the sorcerers; they may seize the soul by surprise, and its unfortunate owner will die.

774 828 761 In the course of a dream, the soul may warn its owner of a threatening danger. One day a native, whose village and name were told to me, dreamed that his enemy offered him a kola nut. Much anxiety ensued, for this is a sign used by the soul to indicate that an enemy threatens one with death. In such a case there is only one remedy, to deposit a few cowries on a nest of large red ants, so they will avert the disaster. The man set out immediately for the nearest ant nest. Alas, a snake bit him along the way, and he died before he could offer his gift to the ants! Such occurrences obviously make a profound imprint on the imagination of the natives, who immediately react with the sophism: post hoc, propter hoc. A few such cases are sufficient to anchor them forever in their superstitions, and innumerable such occurrences were related to me.

774 761 If the soul can leave the body, it is possible to seize it and to prevent it from re-entering its body, and this is why our Blacks do not like to be photographed. They say that there is an evil spirit in the box, who takes the soul and eats it. This is proved by the fact that the individual may later be seen on the piece of paper.

774 753 One becomes sick when his soul cannot re-enter the body because it is held prisoner by an evil sorcerer or by a kikiriga, and many sacrifices must be offered to obtain its release /86/ and return. Entreaties are usually directed to the tangandé in such cases, because it is stronger than all the other spirits, stronger even than the sorcerers, and because its function is to protect the village.

774 761 754 775 Sometimes the soul was so well hidden that the tangandé cannot find it: the sorcerer has eaten it right away, or the tangandé itself is in collusion; or the ancestral spirits are calling the sick person; or, finally, it is God who sent the disease. Nothing can be done, and the person dies. His soul changes names, and henceforth is called kyma. It leaves the body at the moment of death. If it was taken by a sorcerer or by the ancestral spirits, at the moment of death it leaves the sacred grove where it was held captive. It proceeds to the place of souls from where it will return to the grave whenever sacrifices are offered to it. It will also return if it wishes to afflict the survivors with a disease of some sort.

775 735 Is the soul punished for the evil it has done on earth and rewarded for the good? Opinions on the subject differ. Some say that when one gives alms to the poor, and the Mossi frequently do, when one is generous and hospitable, God takes all that has been given and sets

791 Anyone may become a sorcerer, and those who take up the call
756 are usually poor chaps who have nothing to live on, who do not have the strength to till the soil, or who simply want to live without working. When someone enters the brotherhood of bara, people say that he wants to learn how to be idle, and they laugh about it.

791 During the dry season the country is overrun with hordes of Gourounsi and Nankana, filthy and ragged, who claim to know everything and to possess a charm for every purpose, even to make peanuts grow. Led by a chief who speaks a few words of Mossi, they wander from one village to another, dancing and singing for the nabas like the mountebanks who perform at the wagon door of fortune tellers to attract the public... They are consulted, and they return home well rigged out thanks to the cowries they have gathered in Mossi country.

754 /105/ The seuya or soul-eaters are greatly feared. The death of
774 a native, especially that of a child, is often ascribed to them. They have the power of leaving the human body they inhabit and wandering about everywhere in search of a soul to eat. Fire is their vehicle, and they travel about at night on the will-o'-the-wisps that wander in the fields around the huts. They may be stopped by the trees and thrown to the ground, and those who possess an amulet more powerful than their can drive them away.

The seuya are extremely dangerous, for complete protection against them is impossible. They work by night. Every mortal soul leaves the body often during the night and goes wandering about. Woe to it if it should come upon a seuya. He will pounce upon the soul or put it under a big stone, and the unfortunate body that owns it will fall ill and eventually die. The only remedy is to offer a sacrifice to the tangandé, and the guardian animal of the village will go on a search until it locates and releases the unhappy soul; the tangandé causes it to re-enter the body, and the sick person gets well. If, however, the seuya ate the soul, or if he is in connivance with the tangandé, nothing can be done, and death swiftly ensues.

791 The bagré sorcerers can tell who is a seuya and who is not. Some
754 of them have a tim which permits them to distinguish the seuya in a crowd of people. They need only smoke a pipe, and the eyes of the soul-eating man will redden and fill with tears. Those accused of
754 being seuya usually deny the charge, and to call someone a seuya is
[578] one of the worst insults. We have already described the heinous death inflicted on these unfortunate people. Old women especially are

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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Tenga Wende of the desire for a good growing year and gives each girl a small part of the wet earth near the shrine; this represents the now sanctified soul (*shiga*) and is placed under the granary from which the millet seeds for the new crop will be taken.

Then those who possess land controlled by the earth custodian organize a hunt for his benefit. The following day, the earth custodian visits each lineage which possesses fields in areas of the bush under his custodianship. He is given calabashes filled with millet gruel, which he pours as a libation on the earth, asking Tenga Wende to grant good health, heavy rains, and a successful harvest to the household. As the libation is poured, the women try to catch a little in their own calabashes of gruel, which they then pour as their sacrifice. Because the millet from the granaries of good harvests is lucky, other women want to try to catch a little of it in their own offerings; thus the libations spill from one calabash into another as they fall on the earth.

The second moon is called "Bega" after the ceremonial which coincides with the first labor in the fields, the clearing and burning which precedes planting. After making a sacrifice at his own altar, the earth custodian goes to the residence of the neighboring priest (*Boga*) specifically charged with the propitiation of the vegetal manifestation of the deity. This visit symbolizes the interdependent relationship of the two priests and the supernatural powers which they control. The *Boga* then repeats the libations made during the previous ritual, but this time the offerings of millet gruel are made to Tido Wende, the force which gives life to the plants, rather than to the earth.

A sacrifice to Pogo Wende, the specific manifestation of Tenga Wende which guards a farmer's fields, is usually made after they have been cleared and prepared for planting. Either before or after the sowing of the first seeds, the farmer asks the earth custodian to sacrifice a sheep or a goat to the field deity, requesting good health, heavy rains, and a rich harvest. This sacrifice (*Pogo Mande*) is the final aspect of the ceremonial preparations for the new economic cycle. It is designed to enlist the benevolence not only of Pogo Wende but also of the twin spirits which inhabit the field. If the twins are well disposed toward the farmer, they will protect the soul (*ki shiga*) of his millet stand from the twin spirits from neighboring fields who might try to steal it. Like the ancestral spirits, the twin spirits send a high wind into a field, blowing the ripening grains from the stalk and liberating their "souls" (*shiise*), which are then captured to enrich the spirits' own fields.

The third moon of the year is called "Cundiba Bega." The fourth, which usually corresponds with the European month of June, is called "unaccompanied" (Quizale), referring to the fact that no ceremonial is observed during its phase. The hard work in the fields is begun at this

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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time. "Waraga," which means "first cultivation," is the name given to the fifth. The sixth, which appears in early September or late August, is called "Baca," meaning "second cultivation."

If the millet is not yet ripe for harvest at the appearance of the seventh moon, it is also called "Baca," since the work of cultivation must continue. This choice rests with the chief of the village of Room. The entire Mossi kingdom waits for his decision to know whether the ceremonial cycle called "Basga," which closes the economic year, is to begin or whether the harvest and its attendant ceremonies are to be put off for another month. Just behind his residence is a sacred millet field whose grains, as they mature, contain an aspect of the souls (*riim shiise*) of the dead kings of the Yatenga. When the millet in this field is ready to be cut, the next moon to appear is called "Yalem," and the ceremonial cycle which closes the economic year is begun. In the early days of the Yatenga dynasty millet from this field was used to prepare a sacrificial gruel to propitiate the deceased rulers of the newly established kingdom. When it is cut today, a first portion is taken to the altar at Room dedicated to the souls of these early kings. Two other bundles of millet are prepared from the same field. One is sent to the *Yatenga Naba* at Ouahigouya, who is the living descendant of the dead kings. The other is sent to the village of Gourcy, the former capital and the first residence of the founder of the Yatenga dynasty, Naba Yadiga.

The emissaries to the two political centers are accompanied by young people who break off stalks of millet from the fields along their way, adding these to the bundles of grain so as to include all of the farmers of the Yatenga in this offering which symbolizes the dependence of the Mossi on the benevolence of the souls of the dead kings and their living descendant. The millet taken to Ouahigouya is sacrificed at the palace altar of the former rulers. Part of the millet sent to Gourcy is sacrificed at the altar of the spirits of the former village chiefs (*nakom shiise*); the other part is sacrificed at the shrine of the former kings. At Ouahigouya and Gourcy a portion of each sacrificial offering of millet is returned to Room with stalks from the local crop at each place. These are used to make a final sacrifice symbolizing the interdependent relationship of Mossi religious, economic, and political organizations. The ceremonial cycle serves to demonstrate the reliance of the people on the benevolence of the spirits of their former kings for their social, economic, and supernatural well-being.

A ceremony called "Kom Filiga" follows. Meaning "water thanksgiving," it is the occasion for thanking the Mossi ruler, the *Yatenga Naba*, for the wise direction of affairs which has permitted the farmers to cultivate their fields in peace. All village and canton chiefs travel to Ouahigouya to salute their king and rededicate themselves to his service.

8: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1958
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776 considered the wife of a male deity called *Winnam*, *Windé*, or *Naba Zidiwindé*. The true nature of Winnam is not clear. The Mossi say: "Winnam is the sun, and Winnam is God"; he is considered a sun god as well as a supreme deity. [775] Winnam is venerated but he is not feared, because it is the dead ancestors who chastise evil-doers by affliction or death. When wicked people die they face the wrath of the ancestors in *Keemsélenga*, or land of the ancestors.

The Mossi have several concepts of the spiritual essence or animating prin- 774 ciple of man. First there is the *seega* (pl. *seesé*), an entity found in all living beings; it leaves the body during sleep, and its adventures provide the dreams of men. The seega can be captured during its nocturnal wanderings or in places [761] where large crowds congregate. If the seega is captured and eaten by a sorcerer, its owner will die. A man's shadow is also called his seega; persons about to die have no shadows, since their seesé have either been stolen or have [822] left on their own account.

Another principle called the *keema* (pl. *keemsé*) is associated with the dead 775 or with persons about to die. The keema of a dying man wanders around and often frightens people; as soon as he is dead, he is no longer referred to by name but is called the "keema." Keemsé is also the word used for the generalized [769] ancestors who sanction the behavior of the living and who must be placated if people wish to have enough food, wives, children, and good health. A man's own keemsé take a vital interest in his affairs in return for which they receive nourishment in the form of the seesé (animals do not have keemsé) of sacrificed animals.

[827] The breath, called *vousem*, is also considered an animating principle by the Mossi and, since it leaves the body through the nose at death, they believe that a man's nose is the first thing to die. It is not clear how the seega is disposed of when the body dies. Some people say it remains forever about the haunts of man; others believe that it goes to a mountain called Plimpikou and disappears into a cavern. Still others believe that the seega becomes the keema and goes to Plimpikou, from whence the keemsé come to visit their descendants. It is difficult to determine whether the Mossi have always been vague about their traditional religious concepts or whether this uncertainty is the result of the influx of such foreign creeds as Islam and Christianity.

175 The first recorded contact between the Mossi and Moslems took place around 1328 when the Yatenga Mossi attacked, burned, and sacked Timbuktu, 797 then held by the Dia dynasty of the Songhoi (Dubois 1896:251). For more than a century afterward, the Mossi pursued a turbulent and aggressive policy in the region of the Niger bend, pushing as far as Gourma, Walata, and Banku (ibid:127). They were finally defeated and routed by Sonni Ali in 1477. In 1499, when Askia the Great (El Hadj Mohammed ben Abou Bekr, usurper of the Songhoi throne from the Sonni dynasty in 1494) returned from his pilgrimage to Mecca, he launched a *jihad* or holy war on the Mossi who had rejected his ultimatum to adopt Islam. Askia defeated the Mossi, "devastated the towns and countryside, took men, women, and children as prisoners, and forcibly converted these captives to Islam" (Dubois 1896:127–128). The